

**Remarks:**

Claim 11 has been amended; claims 12 and 13 have been cancelled; and new claims 16 and 17 have been added. Claims 10 and 14-15 were previously cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1-9, 11 and 16-17 are currently pending for consideration.

**I. Amendments:**

Amended claim 11 depends from claim 1 and now recites that the content of chloride in the silica sol is lower than about 50 ppm by weight. Support for amended claim 11 can be found in the specification at page 3, lines 11-13. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

New claims 16 and 17 depend from claim 1 and recite that the mineral acid has a pH ranging from about -2 to about 2, and about -1.5 to about 1, respectively. Support can be found in the specification at page 3, lines 23-24. No new matter has been added.

**II. The Invention:**

The presently claimed invention is directed to a method for preparing a composition that includes mixing a silica sol having an S-value from about 15 to about 45% and a mineral acid, wherein the weight ratio of silica to mineral acid is from about 1:100 to about 25:100.

The composition, when applied as a gelled electrolyte results in longer service life, shorter gelling time and improved gel strength.

**III. Objections/Rejections:**

**35 USC §102/103**

Claims 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, alternatively, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Greenwood et al (US 2001/0004927).

As claims 12 and 13 have been cancelled, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) or 103(a), in view of Greenwood et al, be withdrawn.

**35 USC §112**

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically the Office Action contends that claim 11 recites the step of providing a composition according to claim 1, but claim 1 is drawn to a method.

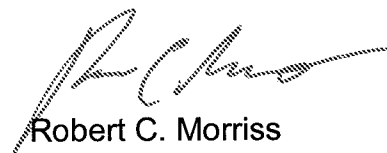
As claim 11 has been amended, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, be withdrawn.

**Conclusion:**

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application as amended is now in proper form for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner has any questions relating to this Amendment or to this application in general, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert C. Morriss  
Attorney for Applicants  
Registration No.: 42,910

Akzo Nobel Inc.  
Legal & IP  
120 White Plains Road  
Tarrytown, NY 10591-5522  
(914) 333-7450